

## **'Next greatest generation'**

By CHET BAUMGARTNER

Visiting those he called "the next greatest generation," Rep. Mike Pence, R-Ind., told students at Bluffton High School Wednesday to build their future on America's three foundations: faith in God, freedom and its natural resources.

"I was in a conversation with some folks about what is the source of American greatness," Pence told the students, "and as rising American citizens, it's something for you to think about.

"If we are going to continue to lead the world as America has now for more than a century, I think we need to get back to those basics."

The representative, at the invitation of Principal Steve Baker, spent about 30 minutes at the high school, tutoring them on conservative principles and fielding their questions.

Pence reiterated that he is "seriously considering running for governor," and when junior Nick Huffman asked him about Gov. Mitch Daniels' education reform, Pence said the legislation "encouraged" him.

He particularly endorsed the voucher law, which, he said would help ensure "parents are in the driver's seat."

Pence also explained to students how Medicaid and Medicare differed and how, if legislators don't address the programs' impending bankruptcy, "We're going to bequeath to you all a mountain range of debt," he said.

Pence specifically pinpointed those two funds when junior Sam Walburn asked him how he would cut the deficit, which Pence had earlier discussed.

Pence first said he would entrust the states' with Medicaid to minimize "a lot of waste and fraud and abuse."

Second, Pence said, he and his Republican partners hope to mold Medicare into a program more reflective of what Congress currently uses, so Medicare recipients could choose between four or five health insurance plans.

He said, however, Medicare would stay the same for those 55 years and older.

"Tell your grandma, Mike Pence said, 'There will be no change to the system,'" he said.

When junior Philip Gerber asked Pence about oil drilling and regulations, Pence told the students he supports a domestic push for oil, but, he said, that just partly dissolves America's dependency on foreign energy.

He said he also supports Indiana's push for wind and solar technology. He said he wanted to offer incentives to people use energy-efficient resources, and he advocated for nuclear energy.

"The real answer to energy independence, Phillip, is all of the above," Pence said. "We say yes to everything."

Finally, amid the state and national issues, Pence championed sophomore Adam Schmidt's idea to build a movie theater in Bluffton.

"I'm for it," he resolved.

Listen to Rep. Pence's entire speech about "American Greatness" at Bluffton News-Banner's "On the Beat" blog: [www.news-banner.com/index/blogbank](http://www.news-banner.com/index/blogbank)